

I am writing to you about Sinclair Broadcasting's plan to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" just prior to the Presidential election. Unless this is paid political advertising, or unless this effort includes a comparable rebuttal effort provided free of charge to the Kerry campaign, this is a very serious assault on the objectivity of the media. It is an outright manipulation of potential voters, timed to take advantage of the broadcaster's extraordinary access to the public without regard to fairness and balance. The FCC must protect our citizens from such blatant disregard for the power of media to persuade.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.